

# GENESIS

## CIRCUMSTANCES OF WRITING

Since pre-Christian times authorship of the Torah, the first five books of the Bible, has been attributed to Moses, an enormously influential Israelite leader from the second millennium BC with an aristocratic Egyptian background. Even though Genesis is technically anonymous, both the Old and New Testaments unanimously recognize Moses as the Torah's author (Jos 8:35; 2Ch 23:18; Neh 8:1; Mk 12:19,26; Lk 2:22; Rm 10:5; Heb 10:28). At the same time, evidence in Genesis suggests that minor editorial changes dating to ancient times have been inserted into the text. Examples include the mention of "Dan" (14:14), a city that was not named until the days of the judges (Jdg 18:29), and the use of a phrase that assumed the existence of Israelite kings (Gn 36:31).

The Torah (a Hebrew term for *law*) was seen as one unit until at least the second century BC. Sometime prior to the birth of Christ, the Torah was divided into five separate books, later referred to as the Pentateuch (lit "five vessels"). Genesis, the first book of the Torah, provides both the universal history of humankind and the patriarchal history of the nation of Israel. The first section (chaps. 1–11) is a general history commonly called the "primeval history," showing how all humanity descended from one couple and became sinners. The second section (chaps. 12–50) is a more specific history commonly referred to as the "patriarchal history," focusing on the covenant God made with Abraham and his descendants: Isaac, Jacob, and Jacob's twelve sons. Genesis unfolds God's plan to bless and redeem humanity through Abraham's descendants. The book concludes with the events that led to the Israelites being in the land of Egypt.

## CONTRIBUTION TO THE BIBLE

Genesis lays the groundwork for everything else we read and experience in Scripture. Through Genesis we understand where we came from, how we got in the fallen state we are in, and the beginnings of God's gracious work on our behalf. Genesis unfolds God's original purpose for humanity.

Genesis provides the foundation from which we understand God's covenant with Israel that was established

with the giving of the Law. For the Israelite community, the stories of the origins of humanity, sin, and the covenant relationship with God helped them understand why God gave them the Law.

## STRUCTURE

Genesis is chiefly a narrative. From a narrative standpoint, God is the only true hero of the Bible, and the book of Genesis has the distinct privilege of introducing him. God is the first subject of a verb in the book and is mentioned more frequently than any other character in the Bible. The content of the first eleven chapters is distinct from the patriarchal stories in chapters 12–50. The primary literary device is the catchphrase "these are the family records." The phrase is broader in meaning than simply "generation," and refers more to a narrative account. This was a common practice in ancient Near East writings. This phrase also serves as a link between the key person in the previous narrative and the one anticipated in the next section. Genesis could be described as historical genealogy, which ties together creation and human history in one continuum.

## CHRYSOSTOM ON GENESIS

Notice this remarkable author, dearly beloved, and the particular gift he had. I mean, while all the other inspired authors told either what would happen after a long time or what was going to take place immediately, this blessed author, being born many generations after the event, was guided by the deity on high and judged worthy to narrate what had been created by the Lord of all from the very beginning. Accordingly he began with these words: "In the beginning God created heaven and earth." He well-nigh bellows at us all and says, "Is it by human beings I am taught in uttering these things? It is the one who brought being from nothing who stirred my tongue in narrating them." Since we therefore listen to these words not as the words of Moses but as the words of the God of all things coming to us through the tongue of Moses, so I beg you, let us heed what is said as distinguished from our own reasoning.

## THE CREATION

**I**n the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.<sup>A</sup>

<sup>2</sup>Now the earth was formless and empty, darkness covered the surface of the watery depths, and the Spirit of God was hovering over the surface of the waters.<sup>3</sup> Then God said, "Let there be light," and there was light.<sup>4</sup> God saw that the light was good, and God separated the light from the darkness.<sup>5</sup> God called the light "day," and the darkness he called "night." There was an evening, and there was a morning: one day.

<sup>6</sup>Then God said, "Let there be an expanse between the waters, separating water from water."

<sup>7</sup>So God made the expanse and separated the water under the expanse from the water above the expanse. And it was so.<sup>8</sup> God called the ex-

pense "sky."<sup>B</sup> Evening came and then morning: the second day.

<sup>9</sup>Then God said, "Let the water under the sky be gathered into one place, and let the dry land appear." And it was so.<sup>10</sup> God called the dry land "earth," and the gathering of the water he called "seas." And God saw that it was good.

<sup>11</sup>Then God said, "Let the earth produce vegetation: seed-bearing plants and fruit trees on the earth bearing fruit with seed in it according to their kinds." And it was so.<sup>12</sup> The earth produced vegetation: seed-bearing plants according to their kinds and trees bearing fruit with seed in it according to their kinds. And God saw that it was good.<sup>13</sup> Evening came and then morning: the third day.

<sup>14</sup>Then God said, "Let there be lights in the expanse of the sky to separate the day from the night. They will serve as signs for seasons<sup>C</sup>

<sup>A</sup>1:1 Or *created the universe*    <sup>B</sup>1:8 Or "heavens."    <sup>C</sup>1:14 Or *for the appointed times*

**1:1 BASIL THE GREAT:** The birth of the world was preceded by a condition of things suitable for the exercise of supernatural powers, outstripping the limits of time, eternal and infinite. The Creator and Demiurge of the universe perfected his works in it, spiritual light for the happiness of all who love the Lord, intellectual and invisible natures, all the orderly arrangement of pure intelligences who are beyond the reach of our mind and of whom we cannot even discover the names. They fill the essence of this invisible world, as Paul teaches us. "For by him were all things created that are in heaven and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones or dominions or principalities or powers" [Col 1:16] or virtues or hosts of angels or the dignities of archangels. To this world at last it was necessary to add a new world, both a school and training place where the souls of men should be taught and a home for beings destined to be born and to die. **HEXAEMERON 1.5.**

**1:2 EPHREM THE SYRIAN:** It was appropriate to reveal here that the Spirit hovered in order for us to learn that the work of creation was held in common by the Spirit with the Father and the Son. The Father spoke. The Son created [see Jn 1:1-3]. And so it was also right that the Spirit offer its work, clearly shown through its hovering, in order to demonstrate its unity with the other persons. Thus we learn that all was brought to perfection and accomplished by the Trinity. **COMMENTARY ON GENESIS 1.**

**1:3 AUGUSTINE:** We ought to understand that God did not say "Let there be light" by a sound brought forth from the lungs or by the tongue and teeth. Such thoughts are those of persons physically preoccupied. To be wise in accord with the flesh is death. "Let there be light" was spoken ineffably. **ON THE LITERAL INTERPRETATION OF GENESIS 5.19.**

**1:4 AUGUSTINE:** These words do not mean that God found before him a good that he had not known but that he was pleased by one that was finished. **TWO BOOKS ON GENESIS AGAINST THE MANICHAEANS 1.8.13.**

**1:6 CYRIL OF JERUSALEM:** [W]hat fault have they to find with the vast creation of God, who out of the fluid nature of the waters formed the stable substance of the heavens? For God said, "Let there be a firmament in the midst of the waters." God spoke once for all, and it stands fast, never failing. **CATECHETICAL LECTURES 9.5.**

**1:7 AUGUSTINE:** The matter was separated by the interposition of the firmament so that the lower matter is that of bodies and the higher matter that of souls. **ON THE LITERAL INTERPRETATION OF GENESIS 8.29.**

**1:8 ORIGEN:** Although God had already previously made heaven, now he makes the firmament. For he made heaven first, about which he says, "Heaven is my throne" [Is 66:1]. But after that he makes the firmament, that is, the corporeal heaven. For every corporeal object is, without doubt, firm and solid; and it is this that "divides the water which is above heaven from the water which is

below heaven" [see vv. 6-7]. **HOMILIES ON GENESIS 1.2.**

**1:9-10 GREGORY OF NYSSA:** "Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that things which are seen are not made of things which do appear" [Heb 11:3]. Let us, following the example of the apostle, leave the question of the "how" in each created thing without meddling with it at all but merely observing incidentally that the movement of God's will becomes at any moment that he pleases a fact, and the intention becomes at once realized in nature. **ON THE SOUL AND THE RESURRECTION.**

**1:11 BASIL THE GREAT:** When the earth heard, "Let it bring forth vegetation and the fruit trees," it did not produce plants that it had hidden in it; nor did it send up to the surface the palm or the oak or the cypress that had been hidden somewhere down below in its womb. On the contrary, it is the divine Word that is the origin of things made. **HEXAEMERON 8.1.**

**1:12 BASIL THE GREAT:** There is nothing truer than this, that either each plant has seed or there exists in it some generative power. And this accounts for the expression "of its own kind." For the shoot of the reed is not productive of an olive tree, but from the reed comes another reed, and from seeds spring plants related to the seeds sown. Thus what was put forth by the earth in its first generation has been preserved until the present time, since the kinds persisted through constant reproduction. **HEXAEMERON 5.2.**

## CREATION OUT OF NOTHING

Some theologians today reject that God created the universe out of nothing because they do not see any one verse in Scripture that explicitly teaches this doctrine. Augustine, however, shows in the following excerpt (*Confessions* 11.5) that it is a logical inference from Genesis 1:1. He prays his thoughts and asks God how he could create the heavens and the earth, and he concludes that God made everything not by fashioning preexistent matter into the heavens and the earth but by speaking them into existence out of nothing.



**H**ow did you make the heaven and the earth, and what was the tool of such a mighty work as yours? For it was not like a human worker fashioning body from body, according to the fancy of his mind, able somehow or other to impose on it a form which the mind perceived in itself by its inner eye (yet how should even he be able to do this, if you had not made that mind?). He imposes the form on something already existing and having some sort of being, such as clay, or stone or wood or gold or such like (and where would these things come from if you had not furnished them?). For you made his body for the artisan, and you made the mind which directs the limbs. You made the matter from which he makes anything. You created the capacity by which he understands his art and sees within his mind what he may do with the things before him. You gave him his bodily sense by which, as if he had an interpreter, he may communicate from mind to matter what he proposes to do and report back to his mind what has been done, that the mind may consult with the Truth which presides over it as to whether what is done is well done.

¶ All these things praise you, the Creator of them all. But how did you make them? How, O God, did you make the heaven and earth? For truly, neither in heaven nor on earth did you make heaven and earth—nor in the air nor in the waters, since all of these also belong to the heaven and the earth. Nowhere in the whole world did you make the whole world, because there was no place where it could be made before it was made. And you did not hold anything in your hand from which to fashion the heaven and the earth, for where could you have gotten what you had not made in order to make something with it? Is there, indeed, anything at all except because you are? Thus you spoke, and they were made, and by thy Word you made them all.

and for days and years. <sup>15</sup>They will be lights in the expanse of the sky to provide light on the earth." And it was so. <sup>16</sup>God made the two great lights — the greater light to rule over the day and the lesser light to rule over the night — as well as the stars. <sup>17</sup>God placed them in the expanse of the sky to provide light on the earth, <sup>18</sup>to rule the day and the night, and to separate light from darkness. And God saw that it was good. <sup>19</sup>Evening came and then morning: the fourth day.

<sup>20</sup>Then God said, "Let the water swarm with <sup>a</sup>living creatures, and let birds fly above the earth across the expanse of the sky." <sup>21</sup>So God created the large sea-creatures <sup>b</sup>and every living creature that moves and swarms in the water, according to their kinds. He also created every winged creature according to its kind. And God saw that it was good. <sup>22</sup>God blessed them: "Be fruitful, multiply, and fill the waters of the seas, and let the birds multiply on the earth." <sup>23</sup>Evening came and then morning: the fifth day.

<sup>24</sup>Then God said, "Let the earth produce living creatures according to their kinds: livestock,

creatures that crawl, and the wildlife of the earth according to their kinds." And it was so. <sup>25</sup>So God made the wildlife of the earth according to their kinds, the livestock according to their kinds, and all the creatures that crawl on the ground according to their kinds. And God saw that it was good.

<sup>26</sup>Then God said, "Let us make man <sup>c</sup>in <sup>d</sup>our image, according to our likeness. They will rule the fish of the sea, the birds of the sky, the livestock, the whole earth, <sup>e</sup>and the creatures that crawl <sup>f</sup>on the earth."

<sup>27</sup>So God created man in his own image; he created him in <sup>g</sup>the image of God; he created them male and female.

<sup>28</sup>God blessed them, and God said to them, "Be fruitful, multiply, fill the earth, and subdue it. Rule the fish of the sea, the birds of the sky, and every creature that crawls <sup>h</sup>on the earth."

<sup>29</sup>God also said, "Look, I have given you every seed-bearing plant on the surface of the entire earth and every tree whose fruit contains seed. This will be food for you, <sup>30</sup>for all the wildlife of the earth, for every bird of the sky, and for

<sup>a</sup>1:20 Lit with swarms of <sup>b</sup>1:21 Or created sea monsters <sup>c</sup>1:26 Or human beings; Hb 'adam, also in v. 27

<sup>d</sup>1:26 Or as <sup>e</sup>1:26 Syr reads sky, and over every animal of the land <sup>f</sup>1:26 Or scurry

<sup>g</sup>1:27 Or man as his own image; he created him as <sup>h</sup>1:28 Or and all scurrying animals

**GREGORY OF NYSSA:** We learn from Scripture in the account of the first creation that first the earth brought forth "the green herb" (as the narrative says), and then from this plant seed was yielded, from which, when it was shed on the ground, the same form of the original plant again sprang up. The apostle, it is to be observed, declares that this very same thing happens in the resurrection also [see 1Co 15:35-36]. And so we learn from him the fact not only that our humanity will be then changed into something nobler but also that what we have therein to expect is nothing else than that which was at the beginning. **ON THE SOUL AND THE RESURRECTION.**

**1:14-15 CYRIL OF JERUSALEM:** Men ought to have been astonished and amazed not only at the arrangement of the sun and moon but also at the well-ordered movements of the stars and their unfettered courses and the timely rising of each of them; how some are signs of summer, others of winter; how some indicate the time for sowing, others the times of navigation. **CATECHETICAL LECTURES 9.8.**

**1:24-25 CHRYSOSTOM:** It wasn't simply for our use that he produced all these things; it was also for our benefit in the

sense that we might see the overflowing abundance of his creatures and be overwhelmed at the Creator's power, and be in a position to know that all these things were produced by a certain wisdom and ineffable love out of regard for the human being that was destined to come into being. **HOMILIES ON GENESIS 7.13.**

**1:26 IRENAEUS:** In previous times man, it is true, was said to have been made according to the image of God, but he was not revealed as such. For the Word according to whose image man was made was still invisible. Therefore also man easily lost the likeness. But when the Word of God was made flesh, he confirmed both image and likeness. For on the one hand [Jesus] truly showed the image by becoming what his image was. On the other hand he firmly established the likeness by the co-assimilation of man to the invisible Father through the visible Word. **AGAINST HERESIES 5.15.1.**

**1:28 GREGORY OF NYSSA:** Let no one think that we depreciate marriage as an institution. We are well aware that it is not a stranger to God's blessing. . . . But our view of marriage is this: that while the pursuit of heavenly things should be a man's first care, yet if he can use the

advantages of marriage with sobriety and moderation, he need not despise this way of serving. **ON VIRGINITY 8.**

**MAXIMUS THE CONFESSOR:** [B]eing in himself the universal union of all, [Christ] has started with our [sexual] division and become the perfect human being, having from us, on our account and in accordance with our nature, everything that we are and lacking nothing, "apart from sin" [Heb 4:15], and having no need of the natural intercourse of marriage. **BOOK OF DIFFICULTIES 41.**

**1:29-30 GREGORY OF NYSSA:** Nature had not yet been divided; everything was completely fresh. Hunters did not capture prey, since people did not yet practice this. The beasts did not yet tear apart prey, since they were not meat eaters yet. . . . So was the first creation, and to this creation will be restored after this [age]. Humans will return to their original creation, rejecting hostility, a life encumbered with care, the slavery of the world to daily worries. Once they have renounced all this, they will return to that utopian life which is not enslaved to the passions of the flesh, which is freedom, the closeness to God, a partaker of the life of the angels. **ON THE ORIGIN OF MAN.**

every creature that crawls on the earth — everything having the breath of life in it — I have given<sup>a</sup> every green plant for food.” And it was so.<sup>31</sup> God saw all that he had made, and it was very good indeed. Evening came and then morning: the sixth day.

**2** So the heavens and the earth and everything in them were completed.<sup>2</sup> On the seventh<sup>b</sup> day God had completed his work that he had done, and he rested<sup>c</sup> on the seventh day from all his work that he had done.<sup>3</sup> God blessed the seventh day and declared it holy, for on it he rested from all his work of creation.<sup>d</sup>

#### MAN AND WOMAN IN THE GARDEN

<sup>4</sup>These are the records of the heavens and the earth, concerning their creation. At the time<sup>e</sup> that the LORD God made the earth and the heavens,<sup>5</sup> no shrub of the field had yet grown on the land,<sup>f</sup> and no plant of the field had yet sprouted, for the LORD God had not made it rain on the land, and there was no man to work the ground.<sup>6</sup> But mist would come up from the earth and water all the ground.<sup>7</sup> Then the LORD God formed the man out of the dust from the ground and breathed the breath of life into his nostrils, and the man became a living being.

<sup>8</sup>The LORD God planted a garden in Eden, in the east, and there he placed the man he had formed.<sup>9</sup> The LORD God caused to grow out of

the ground every tree pleasing in appearance and good for food, including the tree of life in the middle of the garden, as well as the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

<sup>10</sup>A river went<sup>g</sup> out from Eden to water the garden. From there it divided and became the source of four rivers.<sup>h</sup> <sup>11</sup>The name of the first is Pishon, which flows through the entire land of Havilah,<sup>i</sup> where there is gold.<sup>12</sup> Gold from that land is pure;<sup>j</sup> bdellium<sup>k</sup> and onyx<sup>l</sup> are also there.<sup>13</sup> The name of the second river is Gihon, which flows through the entire land of Cush.<sup>14</sup> The name of the third river is Tigris, which runs east of Assyria. And the fourth river is the Euphrates.

<sup>15</sup>The LORD God took the man and placed him in the garden of Eden to work it and watch over it.<sup>16</sup> And the LORD God commanded the man, “You are free to eat from any tree of the garden,<sup>17</sup> but you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for on the day you eat from it, you will certainly die.”<sup>18</sup> Then the LORD God said, “It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper corresponding to him.”<sup>19</sup> The LORD God formed out of the ground every wild animal and every bird of the sky, and brought each to the man to see what he would call it. And whatever the man called a living creature, that was its name.<sup>20</sup> The man gave names to all the livestock, to the birds of the

<sup>a</sup>1:30 I have given added for clarity <sup>b</sup>2:2 Sam, LXX, Syr read sixth <sup>c</sup>2:2 Or ceased, also in v. 3 <sup>d</sup>2:3 Lit work that God created to make  
<sup>e</sup>2:4 Lit creation on the day <sup>f</sup>2:5 Or earth <sup>g</sup>2:10 Or goes <sup>h</sup>2:10 Lit became four heads <sup>i</sup>2:11 Or of the Havilah  
<sup>j</sup>2:12 Lit good <sup>k</sup>2:12 A yellowish, transparent gum resin <sup>l</sup>2:12 Identity of this precious stone uncertain

**1:31 GREGORY OF NAZIANZUS:** He made a first day, a second, a third, and so forth until the seventh day which was a rest from work. According to these days, everything created was subdivided, brought into an order by inexpressible laws. So creation was not an instantaneous act by the all-powerful Word; for him to think or to speak is to accomplish a task. If humans were last to enter the world—and in such a way as to honor God’s handiwork with God’s image—is this not marvelous? It is like saying that as a king he prepared the palace and then, as king, when everything was already prepared, led in the procession. **HOMILIES ON GENESIS 44.**

**2:3 EPHREM THE SYRIAN:** Just as the trees, the vegetation, the animals, the birds and even humankind were old, so also were they young. They were old according to the appearance of their limbs and their substances, yet they were young because of the hour and

moment of their creation. Likewise, the moon was both old and young. It was young, for it was but a moment old, but was also old, for it was full as it is on the fifteenth day. **COMMENTARY ON GENESIS 1.24.1.**

**2:4-6 CHRYSOSTOM:** The earth in compliance with the Lord’s word and direction produced plants and was stirred into pangs of fertility without depending on the sun for assistance (how could it, after all, the sun not yet being created?), nor on the moisture from showers, nor on human labor (human beings, after all, not having been brought forth). **HOMILIES ON GENESIS 12.5.**

**2:7 GREGORY OF NAZIANZUS:** The soul is the breath of God, a substance of heaven mixed with the lowest earth, a light entombed in a cave, yet wholly divine and unquenchable. . . . [God] spoke, and taking some of the newly minted earth his immortal hands made an image into which he imparted some

of his own life. He sent his spirit, a beam from the invisible divinity. **DOGMATIC HYMNS 7.**

**2:8 BASIL THE GREAT:** For this reason we all look to the east in our prayers, but few know that this is because we are seeking the ancient fatherland, which God planted in Eden, toward the east. **ON THE HOLY SPIRIT 27.66.**

**2:16-17 ATHANASIUS:** [H]e brought them into his own garden and gave them a law so that, if they kept the grace and remained good, they might still keep the life in paradise without sorrow or pain or care, besides having the promise of incorruption in heaven. But if they transgressed and turned back and became evil, they might know that they were incurring that corruption in death that was theirs by nature, no longer to live in paradise but cast out of it from that time forth to die and abide in death and corruption. **ON THE INCARNATION 3.4.**

sky, and to every wild animal; but for the man<sup>A</sup> no helper was found corresponding to him.<sup>21</sup> So the LORD God caused a deep sleep to come over the man, and he slept. God took one of his ribs and closed the flesh at that place.<sup>22</sup> Then the LORD God made the rib he had taken from the man into a woman and brought her to the man.<sup>23</sup> And the man said:

This one, at last, is bone of my bone  
and flesh of my flesh;  
this one will be called “woman,”  
for she was taken from man.

<sup>24</sup>This is why a man leaves his father and mother and bonds with his wife, and they become one flesh.<sup>25</sup> Both the man and his wife were naked, yet felt no shame.

#### THE TEMPTATION AND THE FALL

**3** Now the serpent was the most cunning of all the wild animals that the LORD God had made. He said to the woman, “Did God really say, ‘You can’t eat from any tree in the garden?’”

<sup>2</sup>The woman said to the serpent, “We may eat the fruit from the trees in the garden.<sup>3</sup> But about the fruit of the tree in the middle of the garden, God said, ‘You must not eat it or touch it, or you will die.’”

<sup>4</sup>“No! You will not die,” the serpent said to the woman.<sup>5</sup> “In fact, God knows that when<sup>B</sup> you eat it your eyes will be opened and you will be like God,<sup>C</sup> knowing good and evil.”<sup>6</sup> The woman saw

that the tree was good for food and delightful to look at, and that it was desirable for obtaining wisdom. So she took some of its fruit and ate it; she also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate it.<sup>7</sup> Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they knew they were naked; so they sewed fig leaves together and made coverings for themselves.

#### SIN’S CONSEQUENCES

<sup>8</sup>Then the man and his wife heard the sound of the LORD God walking in the garden at the time of the evening breeze,<sup>D</sup> and they hid from the LORD God among the trees of the garden.<sup>9</sup> So the LORD God called out to the man and said to him, “Where are you?”

<sup>10</sup>And he said, “I heard you<sup>E</sup> in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked, so I hid.”

<sup>11</sup>Then he asked, “Who told you that you were naked? Did you eat from the tree that I commanded you not to eat from?”

<sup>12</sup>The man replied, “The woman you gave to be with me — she gave me some fruit from the tree, and I ate.”

<sup>13</sup>So the LORD God asked the woman, “What is this you have done?”

And the woman said, “The serpent deceived me, and I ate.”

<sup>14</sup>So the LORD God said to the serpent:  
Because you have done this,  
you are cursed more than  
any livestock  
and more than any wild animal.

<sup>A</sup>2:20 Or for Adam <sup>B</sup>3:5 Lit on the day <sup>C</sup>3:5 Or gods, or divine beings <sup>D</sup>3:8 Lit at the wind of the day <sup>E</sup>3:10 Lit the sound of you

**2:21-23** **CYRIL OF JERUSALEM:** Of whom in the beginning was Eve begotten? What mother conceived her, the motherless? But the Scripture says that she was born out of Adam’s side. Is Eve then born out of man’s side without a mother, and is a child not to be born without a father, of a virgin’s womb? This debt of gratitude was due to men from womankind: for Eve was begotten of Adam and not conceived of a mother, but as it were brought forth of man alone. **CATECHETICAL LECTURES 12.29.**  
**2:23-24** **AMBROSE:** If the union of Adam and Eve is a great mystery in Christ and in the church, it is certain that as Eve was bone of the bones of her husband and flesh of his flesh, we also are members of Christ’s body, bones of his bones and flesh of his flesh. **LETTERS TO LAYMEN 85.**  
**2:25** **CHRYSOSTOM:** [W]hile sin and disobedience had not yet come on the

scene, they were clad in that glory from above which caused them no shame. But after the breaking of the law, then entered the scene both shame and awareness of their nakedness. **HOMILIES ON GENESIS 15.14.**

**3:4-5** **CHRYSOSTOM:** Do you see how the devil led her captive, handicapped her reasoning and caused her to set her thoughts on goals beyond her real capabilities, in order that she might be puffed up with empty hopes and lose her hold on the advantages already accorded her? **HOMILIES ON GENESIS 16.11.**

**3:8-13** **CHRYSOSTOM:** See the Lord’s loving kindness and the surpassing degree of his long-suffering. I mean, though being in a position to begrudge such great sinners the right of reply and rather than to consign them at once to the punishment he had determined in anticipation of their transgression, he

shows patience and withholds action. He asks a question, receives a reply and questions them further as if inviting them to excuse themselves so that he might seize the opportunity to display his characteristic love in regard to the sinners, even despite their fall. **HOMILIES ON GENESIS 17.13.**  
**3:9-10** **AUGUSTINE:** Insofar as a rebellion of the flesh against the rebellious soul prompted our parents to cover their shame, they experienced one kind of death—God’s desertion of the soul. It was this death that was intimated when God asked Adam, who was beside himself with fear and in hiding, “Where are you?” This was not asked, of course, because God did not know the answer. Rather, it was asked in order to scold Adam by reminding him that there really was nowhere that he could be, once God was not in him. **CITY OF GOD 13.15.**

of

## IRENÆUS OF LYONS

¶ **IRENÆUS SERVED AS BISHOP IN LYONS** (modern-day France) over a Christian community suffering from persecutions and theological disputes with various heretical groups. He was born in Smyrna between ca AD 120 and 140 and became a disciple of Polycarp before migrating west to Lyons. Irenaeus died around AD 202 and two of his works survive: an immense five-volume refutation of Gnosticism commonly known as *Against Heresies* and a short catechetical manual entitled the *Demonstration of the Apostolic Preaching*.

### GNOSTICISM

¶ The main heresy that concerned Irenaeus was Gnosticism, which boasted a complex set of beliefs that aimed to supplant the Christian worldview with a competing creation myth. In general, ancient Gnostics (derived from *gnosis* the Greek term for “knowledge”) believed in a supreme God above a collection of other divine figures residing in a region called the Pleroma. Through the rebellion of a lower divine being, the creator of the world (also known as the Demiurge) was brought forth. The Gnostics argue that the Demiurge was ignorant of the superior gods above him and through evil desires created the material world. At the same time, unbeknownst to the Demiurge, a divine element or “divine spark,” was implanted in human beings. An enduring conflict between spirit and matter ensued until a redeemer figure appeared to impart the “knowledge” of this myth and the salvation found in the ultimate separation of the divine spark from the body and material creation at death to return to the Pleroma.

### ORTHODOXY AND HERESY

¶ In *Against Heresies*, Irenaeus responded to the prevailing streams of Gnosticism by arguing that the orthodox faith of the church precedes any heretical deviation. The apostles handed down the faith of the church; the heretics rejected the faith received by choosing to believe a different myth. In order to help guide Christians' understanding of the faith, Irenaeus held up two things: the Scriptures and the rule of faith. The Scriptures, Irenaeus argued, were given by the Spirit and possess a unity, coherence, and harmony that testifies to the work of salvation that the Father accomplished through the Son. Though there are a diversity of Scripture passages, “through the many voices of the passages there will be heard among us one harmonious melody that hymns praises to God who made all things.” To perceive the theological unity of the Scriptures, Irenaeus also posited the need for a rule of faith, which offered some essential theological guardrails for interpreting Scripture. Irenaeus writes that the “Church, though dispersed throughout the whole world, even to the ends of the earth, has received from the apostles and their disciples this faith.” He goes on to recount the points of this rule of faith (which are themselves derived from Scripture) in summary form including the conviction that God, the Father is Creator of all things, Jesus Christ the Son became incarnate for our salvation, and the Holy Spirit proclaimed the work of Christ in the Scriptures. Irenaeus argues that this rule of faith is Scripture's thesis, or what he calls its “hypothesis,” that stands in sharp contrast to the peculiar theology of the Gnostic myth. Ultimately, Irenaeus is remembered as a champion of Christian orthodoxy at a time when others were exploiting and distorting the Scriptures to defend their own theological system.

*Stephen O. Presley*

You will move on your belly  
and eat dust all the days of your life.

<sup>15</sup> I will put hostility between you  
and the woman,  
and between your offspring  
and her offspring.  
He will strike your head,  
and you will strike his heel.

<sup>16</sup> He said to the woman:  
I will intensify your labor pains;  
you will bear children with painful  
effort.  
Your desire will be for your husband,  
yet he will rule over you.

<sup>17</sup> And he said to the man, "Because you listened to your wife and ate from the tree about which I commanded you, 'Do not eat from it':

The ground is cursed because of you.  
You will eat from it by means of  
painful labor<sup>A</sup>  
all the days of your life.

<sup>18</sup> It will produce thorns and thistles  
for you,  
and you will eat the plants  
of the field.

<sup>19</sup> You will eat bread<sup>B</sup> by the sweat  
of your brow  
until you return to the ground,  
since you were taken from it.

For you are dust,  
and you will return to dust."

<sup>20</sup> The man named his wife Eve<sup>C</sup> because she was the mother of all the living. <sup>21</sup> The LORD God made clothing from skins for the man and his wife, and he clothed them.

<sup>22</sup> The LORD God said, "Since the man has become like one of us, knowing good and evil, he must not reach out, take from the tree of life, eat, and live forever." <sup>23</sup> So the LORD God sent him away from the garden of Eden to work the ground from which he was taken. <sup>24</sup> He drove the man out and stationed the cherubim and the flaming, whirling sword east of the garden of Eden to guard the way to the tree of life.

#### CAIN MURDERS ABEL

**4** The man was intimate with his wife Eve, and she conceived and gave birth to Cain. She said, "I have had a male child with the LORD's help."<sup>D</sup> <sup>2</sup> She also gave birth to his brother Abel. Now Abel became a shepherd of flocks, but Cain worked the ground. <sup>3</sup> In the course of time Cain presented some of the land's produce as an offering to the LORD. <sup>4</sup> And Abel also presented an offering — some of the firstborn of his flock and their fat portions. The LORD had regard for Abel and his offering, <sup>5</sup> but he did not have regard for Cain and his offering. Cain was furious, and he looked despondent.<sup>E</sup>

<sup>A</sup>3:17 Lit it through pain <sup>B</sup>3:19 Or food <sup>C</sup>3:20 Lit Living, or Life <sup>D</sup>4:1 Lit the LORD <sup>E</sup>4:5 Lit and his face fell

**3:15 IRENAEUS:** The enemy would not have been justly conquered unless it had been a man made of woman who conquered him. For it was by a woman that he had power over man from the beginning, setting himself up in opposition to man. Because of this the Lord also declares himself to be the Son of Man, so renewing in himself that primal man from whom the formation of man by woman began, that as our race went down to death by a man who was conquered we might ascend again to life by a man who overcame; and as death won the palm of victory over us by a man, so we might by a man receive the palm of victory over death. [See 1Co 15:20-22.] **AGAINST HERESIES 5.21.1.**

**3:16 AUGUSTINE:** Why, then, should it seem beyond belief that [God] made the bodies of the first human beings in such a way that, if they had not sinned and had not immediately thereupon contracted a disease that would bring death, they would move the members by which

offspring are generated in the same way that one commands his feet when he walks, so that conception would take place without disordered passions and birth without pain? But as it is, by disobeying God's command they deserved to experience in their members, where death now reigned, the movement of a law at war with the law of the mind. **ON THE LITERAL INTERPRETATION OF GENESIS 9.10.18.**

**3:22 CHRYSOSTOM:** [D]o you put forward the testimony of the enemy and the conspirator? The devil said, "You will be gods" [v.5]. Did they really become gods? Therefore, since they did not become gods, they did not receive the knowledge of good and evil either. For the devil is a liar and never speaks the truth. In fact the Gospel says, "He never stays in the truth" [Jn 8:44]. **SERMONS ON GENESIS 7.3:22-24**

**THEODORET OF CYRUS:** Because the devil was envious and the woman was gullible, humankind was immediately cast out of paradise. It was

made to walk the very earth from which Adam had just been created, inheriting sweat, toil and hard labor. Along with Adam, the earth and all living things that followed were subjected to evil . . . [see Rm 8:20-22]. For since Adam did not use good judgment during the age of paradise—an age which was free from sorrow and pain—he was joined to adversity. **ON THE INCARNATION OF THE LORD 6.1.**

**4:3-5 EPHREM THE SYRIAN:** Abel was very discerning in his choice of offerings, whereas Cain showed no such discernment. Abel selected and offered the choicest of his firstborn and of his fat ones, while Cain either offered young grains or certain fruits that are found at the same time as the young grains. Even if his offering had been smaller than that of his brother, it would have been as acceptable as the offering of his brother, had he not brought it with such carelessness. **COMMENTARY ON GENESIS 3.2.1.**

## THE SON OF GOD AS THE SECOND ADAM

Christianity teaches both the dignity and sinfulness of humanity. While we bear God's image, we cannot do so to our fullest because of our sin. In the following selections from his *Against Heretics* (Book III, 18.1-2; 21.10), Irenaeus argues that the preexistent Son of God becomes truly human, like Adam in origin and humanity. The Son, thus, becomes the second Adam and provides salvation through his perfect obedience, death, and resurrection.



**T**he Son of God did not . . . begin to exist, being with the Father from the beginning, but when he became incarnate and was made man, he commenced afresh the long line of human beings and furnished us, in a brief, comprehensive manner, with salvation, so that what we had lost in Adam—namely, to be according to the image and likeness of God—we might recover in Christ Jesus.

¶ For as it was not possible that the man who had once for all been conquered, and who had been destroyed through disobedience, could reform himself, and obtain the prize of victory; and as it was also impossible that he could attain to salvation who had fallen under the power of sin—the Son effected both these things, being the Word of God, descending from the Father, becoming incarnate, stooping low, even to death, and consummating the arranged plan of our salvation, . . .

¶ [A]s by one man's disobedience sin entered, and death obtained [a place] through sin, so also by the obedience of one man, righteousness having been introduced, shall cause life to fructify in those persons who in times past were dead. And as . . . Adam had his substance from untilled and as yet virgin soil (Gn 2:5) and was formed by the hand of God, that is, by the Word of God—for "all things were made by Him" and the Lord took dust from the earth and formed man, so did He who is the Word, recapitulating Adam in himself, rightly receive a birth, enabling him to gather up Adam [into himself] from Mary, who was as yet a virgin. If, then, the first Adam had a man for his father and was born of human seed, it [would be] reasonable to say that the second Adam was begotten of Joseph. But if the former was taken from the dust, and God was his Maker, it was incumbent that the latter also, making a recapitulation in himself, should be formed as man by God, to have an analogy with the former as respects his origin. Why, then, did not God again take dust, but wrought so that the formation should be made of Mary? It was that there might not be another formation called into being, nor any other which should [require to] be saved, but that the very same formation should be summed up [in Christ as had existed in Adam], the analogy having been preserved.

<sup>6</sup>Then the LORD said to Cain, “Why are you furious? And why do you look despondent?<sup>a</sup> <sup>7</sup>If you do what is right, won’t you be accepted? But if you do not do what is right, sin is crouching at the door. Its desire is for you, but you must rule over it.”

<sup>8</sup>Cain said to his brother Abel, “Let’s go out to the field.”<sup>b</sup> And while they were in the field, Cain attacked his brother Abel and killed him.

<sup>9</sup>Then the LORD said to Cain, “Where is your brother Abel?”

“I don’t know,” he replied. “Am I my brother’s guardian?”

<sup>10</sup>Then he said, “What have you done? Your brother’s blood cries out to me from the ground!<sup>c</sup> <sup>11</sup>So now you are cursed, alienated from the ground that opened its mouth to receive your brother’s blood you have shed.<sup>c</sup> <sup>12</sup>If you work the ground, it will never again give you its yield. You will be a restless wanderer on the earth.”

*You have made us for yourself, and our hearts are restless until it comes to rest in you.*

—AUGUSTINE’S CONFESSIONS 1.1

<sup>13</sup>But Cain answered the LORD, “My punishment<sup>d</sup> is too great to bear! <sup>14</sup>Since you are banishing me today from the face of the earth, and I must hide from your presence and become a restless wanderer on the earth, whoever finds me will kill me.”

<sup>15</sup>Then the LORD replied to him, “In that case,<sup>e</sup> whoever kills Cain will suffer vengeance seven times over.”<sup>f</sup> And he placed a mark on Cain

so that whoever found him would not kill him. <sup>16</sup>Then Cain went out from the LORD’s presence and lived in the land of Nod, east of Eden.

#### THE LINE OF CAIN

<sup>17</sup>Cain was intimate with his wife, and she conceived and gave birth to Enoch. Then Cain became the builder of a city, and he named the city Enoch after his son. <sup>18</sup>Irada was born to Enoch, Irada fathered Mehujael, Mehujael fathered Methushael, and Methushael fathered Lamech. <sup>19</sup>Lamech took two wives for himself, one named Adah and the other named Zillah. <sup>20</sup>Adah bore Jabal; he was the father of the nomadic herdsmen.<sup>g</sup> <sup>21</sup>His brother was named Jubal; he was the father of all who play the lyre and the flute. <sup>22</sup>Zillah bore Tubal-cain, who made all kinds of bronze and iron tools. Tubal-cain’s sister was Naamah.

<sup>23</sup>Lamech said to his wives:

Adah and Zillah, hear my voice;  
wives of Lamech, pay attention  
to my words.

For I killed a man for wounding me,  
a young man for striking me.

<sup>24</sup>If Cain is to be avenged seven times over,  
then for Lamech it will be  
seventy-seven times!

<sup>25</sup>Adam was intimate with his wife again, and she gave birth to a son and named him Seth, for she said, “God has given<sup>h</sup> me another child<sup>i</sup> in place of Abel, since Cain killed him.” <sup>26</sup>A son was born to Seth also, and he named him Enosh. At that time people began to call on the name of the LORD.

<sup>a</sup>4:6 Lit *why has your face fallen* <sup>b</sup>4:8 Sam, LXX, Syr, Vg; MT omits “Let’s go out to the field.” <sup>c</sup>4:11 Lit *blood from your hand*

<sup>d</sup>4:13 Or *sin* <sup>e</sup>4:15 LXX, Syr, Vg read “Not so!” <sup>f</sup>4:15 Or *suffers severely* <sup>g</sup>4:20 Lit *the dweller of tent and livestock*

<sup>h</sup>4:25 The Hb word for *given* sounds like the name “Seth.” <sup>i</sup>4:25 Lit *seed*

4:6-7 **CHRYSOSTOM:** God wishes to defuse the wild frenzy and remove the anger by means of his words. You see, he observed the stages of Cain’s thinking and realized the savagery of his deadly intention. . . . Cain gained nothing from the experience. Such was the degree of difference in [the brothers’] attitudes and the excess of evil intent. **HOMILIES ON GENESIS 18.24.**

4:9-10 **ORIGEN:** [W]hat was said of Abel, when he was slain by the wicked murderer Cain, is suitable for all whose blood has been shed wickedly. Let us suppose that the verse “The voice of your brother’s blood is crying to [God] from the ground” is said as well for

each of the martyrs, . . . **EXHORTATION TO MARTYRDOM 50.**

4:11-15 **CHRYSOSTOM:** [S]ince Cain perpetrated practically the same evil as the serpent, which like an instrument served the devil’s purposes, and as the serpent introduced mortality by means of deceit, in like manner Cain deceived his brother, led him out into open country, raised his hand in armed assault against him and committed murder. **HOMILIES ON GENESIS 19.11.**

4:16 **ATHANASIUS:** By means of righteousness we come into God’s presence, as Moses did when he entered the thick cloud where God was (Ex 19:20). On the other hand, by the practice of evil a per-

son leaves the presence of the Lord. For example, Cain, when he killed his brother, left the Lord’s presence as far as his will was concerned. **FESTAL LETTERS 10.** 4:17 **AUGUSTINE:** [I]t is recorded of Cain that he built a city, while Abel . . . built none. For the true city of the saints is in heaven, though here on earth it produces citizens in whom it wanders as on a pilgrimage through time looking for the kingdom of eternity. When that day comes, it will gather together all those who, rising in their bodies, shall have that kingdom given to them in which, along with their Prince, the King of Eternity, they shall reign forever and ever. **CITY OF GOD 15.1.**

**twisted truth—ORIGEN (AD 185–254)**

Origen held to much of what the Bible and the apostles taught. He taught that there is only one God, almighty, Creator of the universe; Jesus Christ is the coeternal Son of God—if God is eternally Father, then Jesus is eternally the Son; the Holy Spirit's glory is no less than that of the Father and the Son; there are rewards and punishments in the afterlife; and there will be a final resurrection of the body.

But on this firm foundation of biblical, apostolic doctrines, Origen built some speculative ideas as well. For instance, Origen taught that God first created spirits without bodies and without genders. When some of the spirits fell into sin, God released stage two of creation, this time the material world. God formed our bodies from the earth, made some of them male and others female, and employed them as vessels to hold human souls, which are actually fallen, preexistent spirits.

Another speculative idea is Origen's teaching on reincarnation. He taught that our spirits—or "intellects"—recycle until we get it right. Even the devil, who also is a spirit, gets another chance and is ultimately redeemed. Origen was an influential and world-famous Bible scholar, but he went wrong when he moved away from the Word of God into philosophical speculation.

**THE LINE OF SETH**

**5** This is the document containing the family<sup>a</sup> records of Adam.<sup>b</sup> On the day that God created man,<sup>c</sup> he made him in the likeness of God;<sup>2</sup> he created them male and female. When they were created, he blessed them and called them mankind.<sup>d</sup>

<sup>3</sup> Adam was 130 years old when he fathered a son in his likeness, according to his image,

and named him Seth.<sup>4</sup> Adam lived 800 years after he fathered Seth, and he fathered other sons and daughters.<sup>5</sup> So Adam's life lasted 930 years; then he died.

<sup>6</sup> Seth was 105 years old when he fathered Enosh.<sup>7</sup> Seth lived 807 years after he fathered Enosh, and he fathered other sons and daughters.<sup>8</sup> So Seth's life lasted 912 years; then he died.

<sup>9</sup> Enosh was 90 years old when he fathered Kenan.<sup>10</sup> Enosh lived 815 years after he fathered Kenan, and he fathered other sons and daughters.<sup>11</sup> So Enosh's life lasted 905 years; then he died.

<sup>12</sup> Kenan was 70 years old when he fathered Mahalalel.<sup>13</sup> Kenan lived 840 years after he fathered Mahalalel, and he fathered other sons and daughters.<sup>14</sup> So Kenan's life lasted 910 years; then he died.

<sup>15</sup> Mahalalel was 65 years old when he fathered Jared.<sup>16</sup> Mahalalel lived 830 years after he fathered Jared, and he fathered other sons and daughters.<sup>17</sup> So Mahalalel's life lasted 895 years; then he died.

<sup>18</sup> Jared was 162 years old when he fathered Enoch.<sup>19</sup> Jared lived 800 years after he fathered Enoch, and he fathered other sons and daughters.<sup>20</sup> So Jared's life lasted 962 years; then he died.

<sup>21</sup> Enoch was 65 years old when he fathered Methuselah.<sup>22</sup> And after he fathered Methuselah, Enoch walked with God 300 years and fathered other sons and daughters.<sup>23</sup> So Enoch's life lasted 365 years.<sup>24</sup> Enoch walked with God; then he was not there because God took him.

<sup>25</sup> Methuselah was 187 years old when he fathered Lamech.<sup>26</sup> Methuselah lived 782 years after he fathered Lamech, and he fathered other sons and daughters.<sup>27</sup> So Methuselah's life lasted 969 years; then he died.

<sup>a</sup>5:1 Lit *written family* <sup>b</sup>5:1 Or *mankind* <sup>c</sup>5:1 Or *Adam, human beings* <sup>d</sup>5:2 Hb *'adam*

**5:3–5 ORIGEN:** Christ is the invisible image of the invisible God [Col 1:15], just as according to the Scripture narrative we say that the image of Adam was his son Seth. It is written thus: "And Adam begot Seth after his own image and after his own kind." This image preserves the unity of nature and substance common to a father and a son. For "whatever the Father does, the Son does likewise" [Jn 5:19]. In this very fact—that the Son does all things just as the Father does—the Father's image is reproduced in the Son, whose birth from the Father is as it were an act

of his will proceeding from the mind. **ON FIRST PRINCIPLES 1.2.6.**

**5:21–24 JOHN CASSIAN:** No one will possess the truth and the power of all this unless he has direct experience to teach him. The Lord will have turned the eyes of his heart away from everything of the here and now, and he will think of these [worldly things] as not transitory so much as already gone, smoke scattered into nothing. He walks with God, like Enoch. He is gone from a human way of life, from human concerns. He is no longer to be found amid the vanity of this present world. The text of Genesis

relates that this actually happened to Enoch. . . . The apostle says, "Because of his faith, Enoch was taken up so that he did not have to encounter death" [Heb 11:5]. **CONFERENCES 3.7.3–4.**

**5:25–28 JEROME:** [T]here are 369 years from the day of Methuselah's birth to the day of Noah's birth; to these add Noah's six hundred years, since the flood occurred in the six hundredth year of his life, and so it works out that Methuselah died in the nine hundred sixty-ninth year of his life, in the same year when the flood began. **HEBREW QUESTIONS ON GENESIS 5.25–29.**

<sup>28</sup> Lamech was 182 years old when he fathered a son. <sup>29</sup> And he named him Noah, <sup>a</sup> saying, "This one will bring us relief from the agonizing labor of our hands, caused by the ground the LORD has cursed." <sup>30</sup> Lamech lived 595 years after he fathered Noah, and he fathered other sons and daughters. <sup>31</sup> So Lamech's life lasted 777 years; then he died.

<sup>32</sup> Noah was 500 years old, and he fathered Shem, Ham, and Japheth.

**SONS OF GOD AND DAUGHTERS OF MANKIND**

**6** When mankind began to multiply on the earth and daughters were born to them, <sup>2</sup> the sons of God saw that the daughters of mankind were beautiful, and they took any they chose as wives <sup>b</sup> for themselves. <sup>3</sup> And the LORD said, "My Spirit will not remain <sup>c</sup> with <sup>d</sup> mankind forever, because they are corrupt. <sup>e</sup> Their days will be 120 years." <sup>4</sup> The Nephilim <sup>f</sup> were on the earth both in those days and afterward, when the sons of God came to the daughters of mankind, who bore children to them. They were the powerful men of old, the famous men.

**JUDGMENT DECREED**

<sup>5</sup> When the LORD saw that human wickedness was widespread on the earth and that every

inclination of the human mind was nothing but evil all the time, <sup>6</sup> the LORD regretted that he had made man on the earth, and he was deeply grieved. <sup>g</sup> <sup>7</sup> Then the LORD said, "I will wipe mankind, whom I created, off the face of the earth, together with the animals, creatures that crawl, and birds of the sky — for I regret that I made them." <sup>8</sup> Noah, however, found favor with the LORD.

**GOD WARNS NOAH**

<sup>9</sup> These are the family records of Noah. Noah was a righteous man, blameless among his contemporaries; Noah walked with God. <sup>10</sup> And Noah fathered three sons: Shem, Ham, and Japheth.

<sup>11</sup> Now the earth was corrupt in God's sight, and the earth was filled with wickedness. <sup>h</sup>

<sup>12</sup> God saw how corrupt the earth was, for every creature had corrupted its way on the earth.

<sup>13</sup> Then God said to Noah, "I have decided to put an end to every creature, for the earth is filled with wickedness because of them; therefore I am going to destroy them along with the earth.

<sup>14</sup> "Make yourself an ark of gopher <sup>i</sup> wood. Make rooms in the ark, and cover it with pitch inside and outside. <sup>15</sup> This is how you are to make it: The ark will be 450 feet long, 75 feet wide, and 45 feet high. <sup>j</sup> <sup>16</sup> You are to make a

<sup>a</sup> 5:29 In Hb, the name *Noah* sounds like "bring us relief." <sup>b</sup> 6:2 Or *women* <sup>c</sup> 6:3 Or *strive* <sup>d</sup> 6:3 Or *in* <sup>e</sup> 6:3 Lit *flesh*  
<sup>f</sup> 6:4 Possibly means "fallen ones"; traditionally, "giants"; Nm 13:31-33 <sup>g</sup> 6:6 Lit *was grieved to his heart*  
<sup>h</sup> 6:11 Or *injustice*, also in v. 13 <sup>i</sup> 6:14 Unknown species of tree; perhaps pine or cypress  
<sup>j</sup> 6:15 Or *300 cubits long, 50 cubits wide, and 30 cubits high*

**5:32 EPHREM THE SYRIAN:** Noah was an example to his sons by his virtue, for [it appears] he had preserved virginity for five hundred years among those of whom it was said, "All flesh corrupted its path" [Gn 6:12]. **COMMENTARY ON GENESIS 6.1.1.**

**6:3 EPHREM THE SYRIAN:** This generation [that is, those alive in Noah's day] will not live nine hundred years like the previous generations, for it is flesh and its days are filled with the deeds of flesh. Therefore, their days will be one hundred and twenty years. If they repent during this time, they will be saved from the wrath that is about to come upon them. But if they do not repent, by their deeds they will call down wrath upon themselves. Grace granted one hundred and twenty years for repentance to a generation that, according to justice, was not worthy of repentance. **COMMENTARY ON GENESIS 6.4.1.**

**6:4 AMBROSE:** Must we really consider as different from giants [here translated "Nephilim"] those men who, even

though they are composed of body and soul, despise the most precious good of the soul, that is, the activity of the mind, and show themselves to be imitators of this flesh, as if confirming that they were heirs of their own mother's foolishness. They only struggle in vain when they believe that they will conquer the heaven with their bold desires and their earthly activities. On the contrary, by choosing a lower way of life and despising the higher life, they are condemned with greater severity since they are guilty of voluntary sins. **ON NOAH 4.8.**

**BASIL THE GREAT:** Strength of arm, swiftness of foot and comeliness of body—the spoils of sickness and the plunder of time—also awaken pride in man, unaware as he is that "All flesh is grass and all the glory of man as the flower of the field. The grass is withered and the flower is fallen" [Is 40:6-7]. Such was the arrogance of the giants because of their strength. Such also was the God-defying pride of the witless Goliath [1Sm 17:4-10]. **HOMILY 20, OF HUMILITY.**

**6:8-9 CHRYSOSTOM:** He "found favor," but "in the eyes of God"; not simply "he found favor" but "in the eyes of the LORD God." This is said in order to show us that [Noah] had a single purpose, that is, to be praised by that eye that never sleeps or rests. He had no care for human glory or scorn or irreverence. **HOMILIES ON GENESIS 23.4.**

**AUGUSTINE:** Speaking of Noah, our unerring Scriptures tell us that he "was a just and perfect man in his generation," meaning that he was perfect as far as citizens of the city of God can be perfect during the pilgrimage of this present life, not, of course, as perfect as they are to be in that immortal life in which they will be as perfect as the angels of God. **CITY OF GOD 15.26.**

**6:14 AUGUSTINE:** Undoubtedly the ark is a symbol of the city of God on its pilgrimage in history. It is a figure of the church that was saved by the wood on which there hung the "Mediator between God and men, himself man, Jesus Christ" [1Tm 2:5]. **CITY OF GOD 15.26.**

# MATTHEW

## CIRCUMSTANCES OF WRITING

The author did not identify himself in the text. However, the title that ascribes this Gospel to Matthew appears in the earliest manuscripts and is possibly original. Many early church fathers (Papias, Irenaeus, Pantaenus, and Origen) acknowledged Matthew as the author. Papias also contended that Matthew first wrote in Hebrew, implying that this Gospel was later translated into Greek.

Even if Papias was wrong about the original language of the Gospel of Matthew, this does not imply that he and other early church leaders were wrong to identify Matthew as the author of this Gospel. In fact the early church unanimously affirmed that the Gospel of Matthew was authored by the apostle Matthew. It would require impressive evidence to overturn this early consensus.

Determining the date of composition of Matthew's Gospel depends largely on the relationship of the Gospels to one another. Most scholars believe that Matthew utilized Mark's Gospel in writing his own Gospel. If this is correct, Matthew's Gospel must postdate Mark's. However, the date of Mark's Gospel is also shrouded in mystery. Irenaeus (ca AD 180) seems to claim that Mark wrote his Gospel after Peter's death in the mid-60s. However, Clement of Alexandria, who wrote only twenty years after Irenaeus, claimed that Mark wrote his Gospel while Peter was still alive. Given the ambiguity of the historical evidence, a decision must be based on other factors.

The date of composition for Mark is best inferred from the date of Luke and Acts. The abrupt ending of Acts which left Paul under house arrest in Rome implies that Acts was written before Paul's release. Since one of the major themes of Acts is the legality of Christianity in the Roman Empire, one would have expected Luke to mention Paul's release by the emperor if it had already occurred. This evidence dates Acts to the early 60s. Luke and Acts were two volumes of a single work, as the prologues to these books demonstrate. Luke was written before Acts. Given the amount of research that Luke invested in the book and the travel that eyewitness interviews probably required, a date in the late 50s is reasonable. If Luke used Mark in writing his own Gospel, as seems likely, by implication Mark was written some time before the late 50s, perhaps the early to mid-50s. Thus, despite Matthew's dependence on Mark, Matthew

may have been written any time beginning in the mid-50s once Mark was completed.

## CONTRIBUTION TO THE BIBLE

As the first book in the NT, the Gospel of Matthew serves as a gateway between the two testaments. Of the NT books, and certainly of the four Gospels, Matthew has the strongest connections to the OT. Matthew gave us God's entire plan from Genesis to Revelation. Matthew looked back and referred to Hebrew prophecies about sixty times ("was fulfilled" and "so that what was spoken ... might be fulfilled"). He also looked forward by dealing not only with Messiah's coming and his ministry, but also his future plan for his church and kingdom.

## STRUCTURE

Matthew divided his Gospel into three major sections. He introduced new major sections with the words "from then on Jesus began to" (4:17; 16:21). These transitional statements divide the Gospel into the introduction (1:1–4:16), body (4:17–16:20), and conclusion (16:21–28:20). Matthew also divided his Gospel into five major blocks of teaching, each of which concludes with a summary statement (8:1; 11:1; 13:53; 19:1; 26:1). Some scholars believe these five major discourses were meant to correspond to the five books of Moses and to confirm Jesus's identity as the new Moses.

## AUGUSTINE ON MATTHEW 5:8

Mark well what follows. When the text says, "Blessed are the pure in heart," it refers to those who have been made clean within, for they shall see God. To behold God is the end and purpose of all our loving activity. But it is the end by which we are to be perfected, not the end by which we come to nothing. Note that food is finished in a different way than a garment is finished. Food is finished when it is consumed in the eating. A garment is finished when it is completed in the weaving. Both are finished, but the former's finish means destruction; the latter's, perfection. Whatever we do, whatever good deeds we perform, whatever we strive to accomplish, whatever we laudably yearn for, whatever we blamelessly desire, we shall no longer be seeking any of those things when we reach the vision of God.

## THE GENEALOGY OF JESUS CHRIST



n account of the genealogy of Jesus Christ, the Son of David, the Son of Abraham:

## FROM ABRAHAM TO DAVID

- <sup>2</sup> Abraham fathered<sup>a</sup> Isaac,  
Isaac fathered Jacob,  
Jacob fathered Judah and his brothers,  
<sup>3</sup> Judah fathered Perez and Zerah by Tamar,  
Perez fathered Hezron,  
Hezron fathered Aram,  
<sup>4</sup> Aram fathered Amminadab,  
Amminadab fathered Nahshon,  
Nahshon fathered Salmon,  
<sup>5</sup> Salmon fathered Boaz by Rahab,  
Boaz fathered Obed by Ruth,  
Obed fathered Jesse,  
<sup>6</sup> and Jesse fathered King David.

## FROM DAVID TO THE BABYLONIAN EXILE

- David fathered Solomon<sup>b</sup> by Uriah's wife,  
<sup>7</sup> Solomon fathered Rehoboam,  
Rehoboam fathered Abijah,  
Abijah fathered Asa,<sup>c</sup>  
<sup>8</sup> Asa<sup>c</sup> fathered Jehoshaphat,  
Jehoshaphat fathered Joram,<sup>d</sup>  
Joram fathered Uzziah,  
<sup>9</sup> Uzziah fathered Jotham,  
Jotham fathered Ahaz,  
Ahaz fathered Hezekiah,  
<sup>10</sup> Hezekiah fathered Manasseh,  
Manasseh fathered Amon,<sup>e</sup>  
Amon fathered Josiah,

- <sup>11</sup> and Josiah fathered Jeconiah  
and his brothers  
at the time of the exile to Babylon.

## FROM THE EXILE TO THE CHRIST

- <sup>12</sup> After the exile to Babylon  
Jeconiah fathered Shealtiel,  
Shealtiel fathered Zerubbabel,  
<sup>13</sup> Zerubbabel fathered Abiud,  
Abiud fathered Eliakim,  
Eliakim fathered Azor,  
<sup>14</sup> Azor fathered Zadok,  
Zadok fathered Achim,  
Achim fathered Eliud,  
<sup>15</sup> Eliud fathered Eleazar,  
Eleazar fathered Matthan,  
Matthan fathered Jacob,  
<sup>16</sup> and Jacob fathered Joseph the husband  
of Mary,  
who gave birth to Jesus who is called  
the Christ.

<sup>17</sup> So all the generations from Abraham to David were fourteen generations; and from David until the exile to Babylon, fourteen generations; and from the exile to Babylon until the Christ, fourteen generations.

## THE NATIVITY OF THE CHRIST

<sup>18</sup> The birth of Jesus Christ came about this way: After his mother Mary had been engaged<sup>f</sup> to Joseph, it was discovered before they came together that she was pregnant from the Holy Spirit. <sup>19</sup> So her husband Joseph, being a righteous

<sup>a</sup>1:2 In vv. 2-16 either a son, as here, or a later descendant, as in v. 8 <sup>b</sup>1:6 Other mss add *King* <sup>c</sup>1:7,8 Other mss read *Asaph*

<sup>d</sup>1:8 = Jehoram <sup>e</sup>1:10 Other mss read *Amos* <sup>f</sup>1:18 Or *betrothed*

**1:16 AUGUSTINE:** Since he thus related that Christ was born from Mary as a virgin and not as a result of intercourse with Joseph, for what reason does Matthew call him his father, if not because we understand Joseph to be truly the husband of Mary, not through intercourse of the flesh but in virtue of the genuine spiritual union of marriage? ... All this suggests that Luke's phrase, "as was supposed," [Lk 3:23] was inserted with a view of correcting those of the opinion that [Jesus] was born from Joseph in the same way that others are born. **HARMONY OF THE GOSPELS 2.1.3.**

**1:18 CHRYSOSTOM:** Do not speculate beyond the text. Do not require of it something more than what it simply says. Do not ask, "But precisely how was it that the Spirit accomplished this in a virgin?"

For even when nature is at work, it is impossible fully to explain the manner of the formation of the person. How then, when the Spirit is accomplishing miracles, shall we be able to express their precise causes? Lest you should weary the writer or disturb him by continually probing beyond what he says, he has indicated who it was that produced the miracle. He then withdraws from further comment. "I know nothing more," he in effect says, "but that what was done was the work of the Holy Spirit."

Shame on those who attempt to pry into the miracle of generation from on high! For this birth can by no means be explained, yet it has witnesses beyond number and has been proclaimed from ancient times as a real birth handled with human hands. What kind of extreme

madness afflicts those who busy themselves by curiously prying into the unutterable generation? For neither Gabriel nor Matthew was able to say anything more, but only that the generation was from the Spirit. But how from the Spirit? In what manner? Neither Gabriel nor Matthew has explained, nor is it possible. Do not imagine that you have untangled the mystery merely by hearing that this is the work of the Spirit. For we remain ignorant of many things, even while learning of them. So how could the infinite One reside in a womb? How could he that contains all be carried as yet unborn by a woman? How could the Virgin bear and continue to be a virgin? Explain to me how the Spirit designed the temple of his body. **THE GOSPEL OF MATTHEW, HOMILY 4.3.**

man, and not wanting to disgrace her publicly, decided to divorce her secretly.

<sup>20</sup> But after he had considered these things, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, "Joseph, son of David, don't be afraid to take Mary as your wife, because what has been conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. <sup>21</sup> She will give birth to a son, and you are to name him Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins."

<sup>22</sup> Now all this took place to fulfill what was spoken by the Lord through the prophet:

<sup>23</sup> **See, the virgin will become pregnant and give birth to a son, and they will name him Immanuel,<sup>A</sup>**

which is translated "God is with us."

<sup>24</sup> When Joseph woke up, he did as the Lord's angel had commanded him. He married her <sup>25</sup> but did not have sexual relations with her until she gave birth to a son. <sup>B</sup> And he named him Jesus.

### WISE MEN VISIT THE KING

**2** After Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of King Herod, wise men from the east arrived in Jerusalem, <sup>2</sup> saying, "Where is he who has been born king of the Jews? For we saw his star at its rising and have come to worship him."<sup>C</sup>

<sup>3</sup> When King Herod heard this, he was deeply disturbed, and all Jerusalem with him. <sup>4</sup> So he

assembled all the chief priests and scribes of the people and asked them where the Christ would be born.

<sup>5</sup> "In Bethlehem of Judea," they told him, "because this is what was written by the prophet:

<sup>6</sup> **And you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, are by no means least among the rulers of Judah:**

**Because out of you will come a ruler who will shepherd my people Israel."<sup>D</sup>**

<sup>7</sup> Then Herod secretly summoned the wise men and asked them the exact time the star appeared. <sup>8</sup> He sent them to Bethlehem and said, "Go and search carefully for the child. When you find him, report back to me so that I too can go and worship him."<sup>E</sup>

<sup>9</sup> After hearing the king, they went on their way. And there it was — the star they had seen at its rising. It led them until it came and stopped above the place where the child was. <sup>10</sup> When they saw the star, they were overwhelmed with joy. <sup>11</sup> Entering the house, they saw the child with Mary his mother, and falling to their knees, they worshiped him. <sup>F</sup> Then they opened their treasures and presented him with gifts: gold, frankincense, and myrrh. <sup>12</sup> And being warned in a dream not to go back to Herod, they returned to their own country by another route.

<sup>A</sup>1:23 Is 7:14 <sup>B</sup>1:25 Other mss read to her firstborn son <sup>C</sup>2:2 Or to pay him homage <sup>D</sup>2:6 Mc 5:2

<sup>E</sup>2:8 Or and pay him homage <sup>F</sup>2:11 Or they paid him homage

**2:1 THEODORE OF MOPSUESTIA:** The patriarch Jacob had already anticipated this very time precisely when he said, "The scepter shall not depart from Judah, nor the ruler's staff from between his feet, until he comes to whom it belongs" [Gn 49:10]. Matthew brought these same prophetic testimonies forward in order to show from them that everything came about according to the words of the prophets. On the one hand, he showed that Christ would come from Bethlehem, as had been said by the prophet [see Mc 5:2]. On the other hand, he demonstrated that this saying of Jacob prefigured that this was to occur "in the days of Herod." First then those who ruled over Israel were from David, from the tribe of Judah (Levi's brother), until the captivity in Babylon. After these things the high priests themselves who held the leadership of the people were of the tribe of Levi, but their lineage was also traced from Judah. An intermixture had occurred between the levitical tribe—especially

the high priests—and the royal tribe of Judah. Afterward, when the brothers Aristobulus and Hyrcanus came into conflict with each other and warred over the monarchy, the kingdom finally settled upon Herod, who was not a Jew by race, for he was the son of Antipater, an Idumean. And it was, in fact, during the time of his kingdom that Christ the Master appeared, when the kings and rulers from among the Jews had ceased.

#### FRAGMENT 6.

**2:9 CHRYSOSTOM:** The star brought them to inquire of the Jews, that their discovery might be made evident to all, and then appeared to them again. Note how fitting was the order of events: the wise men saw the star, were received by the Jews and their king; they heard prophecy to explain what had appeared; the angel instructed them; and then they journeyed from Jerusalem to Bethlehem by the guidance of the star. From all this we learn that this was not an ordinary star, for no other star has this capacity to guide, not merely to move but to beckon,

to "go before them," drawing and guiding them along their way. **THE GOSPEL OF MATTHEW, HOMILY 7.3.**

**2:12 GREGORY THE GREAT:** The return of the magi "by another way" home suggests a spiritual interpretation: As they were advised to take another way, so are we. Our home country is the paradise from which we have fallen. We are forbidden to return to it. When we come to know Jesus, we can return along the way by which he returned. We left our paradise by our pride and disobedience, by overvaluing visible things, by succumbing to the tasting of forbidden fruit. We now can return only by weeping and obedience, rejecting visible things, and by curbing our bodily appetites. So let us, like the magi, return to our home country by another way than the way we left it. Our evil inclination led us away from the joys of paradise. Our turning around in repentance summons us to return by another way. In this way, dearly beloved, we are being awakened to the fear of God. Be vigilant. Set before the

## THE FLIGHT INTO EGYPT

<sup>13</sup> After they were gone, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream, saying, "Get up! Take the child and his mother, flee to Egypt, and stay there until I tell you. For Herod is about to search for the child to kill him." <sup>14</sup> So he got up, took the child and his mother during the night, and escaped to Egypt. <sup>15</sup> He stayed there until Herod's death, so that what was spoken by the Lord through the prophet might be fulfilled: **Out of Egypt I called my Son.**<sup>a</sup>

## THE MASSACRE OF THE INNOCENTS

<sup>16</sup> Then Herod, when he realized that he had been outwitted by the wise men, flew into a rage. He gave orders to massacre all the boys in and around Bethlehem who were two years old and under, in keeping with the time he had learned from the wise men. <sup>17</sup> Then what was spoken through Jeremiah the prophet was fulfilled:

<sup>18</sup> **A voice was heard in Ramah, weeping,<sup>b</sup> and great mourning, Rachel weeping for her children;**

**and she refused to be consoled, because they are no more.**<sup>c</sup>

## THE RETURN TO NAZARETH

<sup>19</sup> After Herod died, an angel of the Lord appeared in a dream to Joseph in Egypt, <sup>20</sup> saying, "Get up, take the child and his mother, and go to the land of Israel, because those who intended to kill the child are dead." <sup>21</sup> So he got up, took the child and his mother, and entered the land of Israel. <sup>22</sup> But when he heard that Archelaus was ruling over Judea in place of his father Herod, he was afraid to go there. And being warned in a dream, he withdrew to the region of Galilee. <sup>23</sup> Then he went and settled in a town called Nazareth to fulfill what was spoken through the prophets, that he would be called a Nazarene.

## THE HERALD OF THE CHRIST

**3** In those days John the Baptist came, preaching in the wilderness of Judea<sup>2</sup> and saying, "Repent, because the kingdom of heaven

<sup>a</sup> 2:15 Hs 11:1 <sup>b</sup> 2:18 Other mss read *Ramah, lamentation, and weeping,* <sup>c</sup> 2:18 Jr 31:15

eyes of your heart the deceitfulness of your works. Take seriously the severity of the final judgment. Consider how strict a judge is coming. He threatens the impenitent with terror. Yet he still gives them time for repentance. He bears with us. He puts off coming for this reason, that he may find fewer to condemn. **FORTY GOSPEL HOMILIES 10.7.** **2:13-15 PETER CHRYSOLOGUS:** Flight then was not occasioned by fear but by what had come through the mystery of prophecy. The Evangelist planted the seed when he thus spoke: "Take the boy and his mother and flee into Egypt." And later, "that what was written might be fulfilled: 'From Egypt have I summoned my son.'" Christ fled so that he might establish the truth of the law, faith in prophecy and the testimony of the psalter. The Lord himself says, "It was needful that what was written in the law and the prophets and the psalms be fulfilled by me" [Lk 24:44]. Christ fled for us, not for himself. Christ fled so that at the right time he might serve as a steward of the sacraments [the divine mysteries]. Christ fled so that by granting absolution he might take away the source of abuses to come and that he might give proof of faith to those who would believe. And finally, Christ fled so that he might bestow on us faith even when we have to flee, because in the face of persecution it is better to flee than

to deny the faith. For Peter, because he was unwilling to flee, denied the Lord. John, lest he deny the Lord, fled. **SERMONS 150.11.**

**2:14 CHRYSOSTOM:** Mary, who had never even passed beyond the threshold of her own house, was commanded to undergo this long ordeal of adversity for the sake of this wonderful birth and for her own spiritual labor and development. Isn't this remarkable: While Palestine plots, it is Egypt that receives and preserves the One for whom the plots are designed! This is reminiscent of the patriarch Jacob, who also sought succor in Egypt, anticipating the coming of our Lord. **THE GOSPEL OF MATTHEW, HOMILY 8.2.**

**2:19-22 HILARY OF POITIERS:** After the death of Herod, Joseph was advised by the angel to return to Judea with the boy and his mother. When he returned he heard that Archelaus, son of Herod, was king. So he was afraid to go, but the angel admonished him to cross over into the region of Galilee, and they lived in the city of Nazareth. . . . Joseph resembles the apostles to whom Christ entrusted the spreading of the news about him. Similar to what happened with Joseph after the death of Herod, they must deal with the same people who caused the Lord to suffer. The apostles are commanded to preach to the Jews, for they were sent to the lost sheep of

the house of Israel. But when they saw that the power remained in the hands of inherited faithlessness, they became afraid and retreated. **ON MATTHEW 2.1.** **2:23 CHROMATIUS OF AQUILEIA:** Our Lord and Savior is called "the Nazarene" as much after the name of the place, the city of Nazareth, as from the mystery of the law. For, according to the law, those are called Nazarenes who make an extraordinary vow of chastity to God, maintaining that vow with the hair of their heads, which the ordained law had commanded them to offer as a sacrifice [see Nm 6:1-21]. Therefore, because the author and ruler of every act of sanctity and piety is Christ the Lord, who said through the prophet, "Let them be holy, since I am holy, says the Lord" [Lv 19:2], it was not undeservedly that he was called "the Nazarene." It was he who, following truly what was preordained in the law, offered as a pledge to God the Father the sacrifice of his own body. David spoke about this pledge when he said of the Lord, "Just as Jacob swore an oath to the Lord, he was offered a pledge to God" [Gn 28:20]. The Lord would show himself as the Nazarene at the time when he became a creature of flesh. **TRACTATE ON MATTHEW 7.2.**

**3:1 CHRYSOSTOM:** How "in those days"? What days? He does not mean the days when Jesus was a child at Nazareth but thirty years later, when John came, as

has come near!"<sup>3</sup> For he is the one spoken of through the prophet Isaiah, who said:

**A voice of one crying out  
in the wilderness:  
Prepare the way for the Lord;  
make his paths straight!<sup>A</sup>**

<sup>4</sup> Now John had a camel-hair garment with a leather belt around his waist, and his food was locusts and wild honey.<sup>5</sup> Then people from Jerusalem, all Judea, and all the vicinity of the Jordan were going out to him,<sup>6</sup> and they were baptized by him in the Jordan River, confessing their sins.

<sup>7</sup> When he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees coming to his baptism, he said to them, "Brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the coming wrath?<sup>8</sup> Therefore produce fruit consistent with<sup>b</sup> repentance.<sup>9</sup> And don't presume to say to yourselves, 'We have Abraham as our father.' For I tell you that God is able to raise up children for Abraham from these stones.<sup>10</sup> The ax is already at the root of the trees. Therefore, every tree that doesn't produce good fruit will be cut down and thrown into the fire.

<sup>11</sup> "I baptize you with<sup>c</sup> water for repentance, but the one who is coming after me is more powerful than I. I am not worthy to remove<sup>d</sup> his sandals. He himself will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire.<sup>12</sup> His winnowing shovel is in his hand, and he will clear his threshing floor and gather his wheat into the barn. But the chaff he will burn with fire that never goes out."

### THE BAPTISM OF JESUS

<sup>13</sup> Then Jesus came from Galilee to John at the Jordan, to be baptized by him.<sup>14</sup> But John tried to stop him, saying, "I need to be baptized by you, and yet you come to me?"

<sup>15</sup> Jesus answered him, "Allow it for now, because this is the way for us to fulfill all righteousness." Then John allowed him to be baptized.

<sup>16</sup> When Jesus was baptized, he went up immediately from the water. The heavens suddenly

#### *Twisted Truth—MODALISM (CA AD 222)*

In the early church there was a group of thinkers called the modalistic monarchians. Modalists did not hesitate to speak of God as Father, Son, and Spirit, but for them these were just names attached to different modes of existence. God is a monad—or a single unitive principle—who expressed himself in three operations or functions. The terms *Father*, *Son*, and *Spirit* do not reflect any real distinctions but rather names applied to the same God who appeared in different times and locations. These distinct roles or "modes" of God functioned according to the purpose and plan of God within the history of salvation. So God revealed himself in the mode of Creator in the Father, the mode of Redeemer in the Son, and the mode of Sanctifier in the Spirit. So, when the Son suffered and died on the cross, the Father also suffered and died, and this is why some modalists were called patripassianists (those who believe the Father suffered and died on the cross).

Today Christians should be careful when using analogies to explain the nature of God. There are many popular analogies including the egg analogy (shell, white, and yolk), the water analogy (water, ice, and steam), or the man analogy (father, husband, and brother). All of these are modalistic, as they do not make a distinction between the particular persons of God. The best way to use the analogies, then, is not to explain what God *is* (because they almost always end up in modalism) but to explain what God *is not*. God eternally exists as one nature in three persons, which is not like any of these analogies.

<sup>A</sup> 3:3 Is 40:3    <sup>B</sup> 3:8 Lit fruit worthy of    <sup>C</sup> 3:11 Or in    <sup>D</sup> 3:11 Or to carry

Luke also testifies. Why then is it said "in those days"? It is common in Scripture to use this rhetorical device: In speaking of something that seems to come immediately after, it also refers to something that comes to pass many years later. **THE GOSPEL OF MATTHEW, HOMILY 10.1**

**3:3 CHROMATIUS OF AQUILEIA:** Hence John prepared these ways of mercy and truth, faith and justice. Concerning them, Jeremiah also declared, "Stand by the roads, and look, and ask for the ancient paths, where the good way is, and walk in it" [Jr 6:16]. Because the heav-

enly kingdom is found along these ways, not without good reason John adds, "The kingdom of heaven is near" [v. 2]. So do you want the kingdom of heaven to also be near for you? Prepare these ways in your heart, in your senses and in your soul. Pave within you the way of chastity, the way of faith and the way of holiness. Build roads of justice. Remove every scandal of offense from your heart. For it is written: "Remove the stones from the road" [Is 62:10]. And then, indeed, through the thoughts of your heart and the very movements of your soul, Christ

the King will enter along certain paths.

**TRACTATE ON MATTHEW 8.1.**

**3:15 CHROMATIUS OF AQUILEIA:** The Lord here is testing the faithful deference of service on the part of his servant, but he reveals the mystery of his dispensation by saying, "Let it be so now; for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness. . . ." Therefore the Lord did not want to be baptized for his own sake but for ours, in order to fulfill all righteousness. Indeed, it is only right that whatever someone instructs another to do, he should first do himself. Since the

## THE INSEPARABLE OPERATIONS OF THE TRINITY

One key feature of classic Christian reflection on the Trinity is the idea that the three Persons of the Trinity are undivided, or inseparable, in their mission. Augustine defends this view in a homily on the baptism of Jesus (Sermon 52). In the following selection from this homily, he explains how the Father and the Son participate in the works of the incarnation, passion, and resurrection distinctly but inseparably.



**T**he Son indeed and not the Father was born of the virgin Mary; but this very birth of the Son, not of the Father, was the work both of the Father and the Son. The Father indeed suffered not, but the Son, yet the suffering of the Son was the work of the Father and the Son. The Father did not rise again, but the Son, yet the resurrection of the Son was the work of the Father and the Son. . . . It is my place then to prove by testimonies of the sacred books, that the birth, and passion, and resurrection of the Son were in such sort the works of the Father and the Son, that whereas it is the birth, and passion, and resurrection of the Son only, yet these three things which belong to the Son only, were wrought neither by the Father alone, nor by the Son alone, but by the Father and the Son. . . .

¶ I must first teach you concerning the birth of Christ, how it is the work of the Father and the Son, though what the Father and the Son did work pertains only to the Son. I will quote Paul. . . . "But," says he, "when the fullness of time came, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law." . . . See, the Father made the Son to be born of a virgin. For "when the fullness of time was come, God sent his Son;" the Father sent his Christ. How did he send him? "Made of a woman, made under the Law." The Father then made him of a woman under the law. . . .

¶ We have then proved that the birth of the Son was the work of the Father; now let us prove that it was the work of the Son also. Now what is the birth of the Son of the Virgin Mary? Surely it is his assumption of the form of a servant in the virgin's womb. . . . Now hear how this was the work of the Son also: "Who when he was in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God, but emptied himself, taking upon him the form of a servant." . . . In [these verses] the Son himself "emptied himself, taking the form of a servant," we see that the birth of the Son was the work also of the Son himself. . . .

¶ Let us also prove that the passion of the Son was the work of the Father and the Son. We may see that the passion of the Son is the work of the Father, since it is written, "Who spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all," and that the passion of the Son was his own work also, "Who loved me, and gave himself for me." The Father delivered

up the Son, and the Son delivered up himself. . . . Therefore, as the birth, so the passion of Christ, was not the work of the Son without the Father, nor of the Father without the Son. The Father delivered up the Son, and the Son delivered up himself. . . . Let us then pass on from this point also, and come we to the resurrection.

¶ Let us see the Son indeed, and not the Father, rising again, but both the Father and the Son working the resurrection of the Son. The resurrection of the Son is the work of the Father; for it is written, "As a result of which he exalted him, and gave him a name which is above every name." The Father, therefore, raised the Son to life again, in exalting, and awakening him from the dead. And did the Son also raise himself? Assuredly he did because he said of the temple as the figure of his own body, "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it again." Lastly, as the laying down of life has reference to the passion, so the taking it again has reference to the resurrection. . . . "I have power," Jesus says, "to lay down my life, and I have power to take it again. No man takes it from me, but I lay it down of myself, and take it again." . . .

¶ I will summarize it briefly and entrust it to be stored up in your minds as a thing, to my thinking, of the greatest usefulness. The Father was not born of the Virgin; yet this birth of the Son from the virgin was the work both of the Father and the Son. The Father suffered not on the cross; yet the passion of the Son was the work both of the Father and the Son. The Father rose not again from the dead; yet the resurrection of the Son was the work both of the Father and the Son. You see then a distinction of Persons, and an inseparableness of operation. Let us not say therefore that the Father does anything without the Son, or the Son anything without the Father.

opened for him,<sup>a</sup> and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and coming down on him.<sup>17</sup> And a voice from heaven said: "This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well-pleased."

#### THE TEMPTATION OF JESUS

**4** Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil.<sup>2</sup> After he had fasted forty days and forty nights, he was hungry.<sup>3</sup> Then the tempter approached him and said, "If you are the Son of God, tell these stones to become bread."

<sup>4</sup> He answered, "It is written: **Man must not live on bread alone but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.**"<sup>b</sup>

<sup>5</sup> Then the devil took him to the holy city, had him stand on the pinnacle of the temple,<sup>6</sup> and said to him, "If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down. For it is written:

**He will give his angels orders concerning you, and they will support you with their hands so that you will not strike your foot against a stone.**"<sup>c</sup>

<sup>7</sup> Jesus told him, "It is also written: **Do not test the Lord your God.**"<sup>d</sup>

<sup>8</sup> Again, the devil took him to a very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their splendor.<sup>9</sup> And he said to him, "I will give you all these things if you will fall down and worship me."<sup>e</sup>

<sup>10</sup> Then Jesus told him, "Go away,<sup>f</sup> Satan! For it is written: **Worship the Lord your God, and serve only him.**"<sup>g</sup>

<sup>11</sup> Then the devil left him, and angels came and began to serve him.

#### MINISTRY IN GALILEE

<sup>12</sup> When he heard that John had been arrested, he withdrew into Galilee.<sup>13</sup> He left Nazareth and went to live in Capernaum by the sea, in the region of Zebulun and Naphtali.<sup>14</sup> This was to fulfill what was spoken through the prophet Isaiah:

<sup>15</sup> **Land of Zebulun and land of Naphtali, along the road by the sea, beyond the Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles.**

<sup>16</sup> **The people who live in darkness have seen a great light, and for those living in the land of the shadow of death, a light has dawned.**<sup>h,i</sup>

<sup>17</sup> From then on Jesus began to preach, "Repent, because the kingdom of heaven has come near."

#### THE FIRST DISCIPLES

<sup>18</sup> As he was walking along the Sea of Galilee, he saw two brothers, Simon (who is called Peter), and his brother Andrew. They were casting a net into the sea — for they were fishermen.<sup>19</sup> "Follow me," he told them, "and I will make you fish for<sup>j</sup> people."<sup>20</sup> Immediately they left their nets and followed him.

<sup>21</sup> Going on from there, he saw two other brothers, James the son of Zebedee, and his brother John. They were in a boat with Zebedee their father, preparing their nets, and he called them.<sup>22</sup> Immediately they left the boat and their father and followed him.

#### TEACHING, PREACHING, AND HEALING

<sup>23</sup> Now Jesus began to go all over Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the good news of the kingdom, and healing every<sup>k</sup> dis-

<sup>a</sup> 3:16 Other mss omit for him <sup>b</sup> 4:4 Dt 8:3 <sup>c</sup> 4:6 Ps 91:11-12 <sup>d</sup> 4:7 Dt 6:16 <sup>e</sup> 4:9 Or and pay me homage <sup>f</sup> 4:10 Other mss read "Get behind me" <sup>g</sup> 4:10 Dt 6:13 <sup>h</sup> 4:16 Lit dawned on them <sup>i</sup> 4:15-16 Is 9:1-2 <sup>j</sup> 4:19 Or you fishers of <sup>k</sup> 4:23 Or every kind of

Lord and Master of the human race had come, he wanted to teach by his example what must be done for disciples to follow their Master and for servants their Lord. **TRACTATE ON MATTHEW 13.2-3.**

**3:17 HILARY OF POITIERS:** A voice from heaven thus spoke: "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." God's Son is manifested both by hearing and by sight. Both the witnesses of contemplation and the spoken word are sent from the Lord to an unfaithful people who disregard the prophets. At the same time, we knew from those who were immersed in Christ that after baptism with

water the Holy Spirit would descend to us from the heavenly gates. Then we would be filled with the anointing of heavenly glory and become God's children through the adoption the Father's voice announced. **ON MATTHEW 2.6.**

**4:1 THEODORE OF MOPSUESTIA:** For since Adam met with luxury in paradise and, through deception, deteriorated to what is worse, it was necessary that [the Spirit] lead Christ into the wilderness in order to enfeeble the devil's force by someone greater in strength. So he fasted for forty nights and days. **FRAGMENT 17.**

**4:7 CHRYSOSTOM:** What does Christ then do? He is neither indignant nor provoked but with extreme gentleness reasons with him again from the Scriptures, saying, "You shall not [test] the Lord your God," teaching us that we must overcome the devil not by miracles but by forbearance and longsuffering and that we should do nothing at all for display and vainglory. **THE GOSPEL OF MATTHEW, HOMILY 13.4.**

**4:23 CHROMATIUS OF AQUILEIA:** Isaiah predicted this would happen when he said, "He himself took our infirmities and bore our sickness" [Is 53:4]. To this